

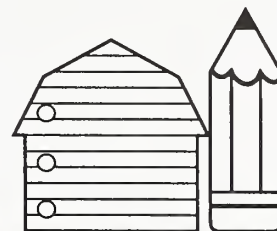
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact the AITC Director, Room 4307, South Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-0991. 202/720-7925.

JULY/AUGUST 95

Vol. 10, No. 3

North Dakota AITC Plans Advanced Teacher Workshop

For the past ten years, the North Dakota AITC program has sponsored a popular teacher workshop. Each year, when teachers were asked how it could be improved, they would answer, "Give us more." So this summer, says Sarah Nordby, state contact, "After ten years, we decided it was about time we gave teachers what they've been asking for!"

Teachers who have completed the original AITC teacher workshop will be able to enroll in an additional two-day program based on the Smithsonian Institution's "Seeds of Change" exhibition. The curator of the exhibit, Carolyn Sadler from the Museum of Natural History, will conduct the first day of the workshops, and the educators who regularly conduct the teacher training program will teach a second day.

The exhibit, which was on display in North Dakota as well as in every state, focuses on "seeds of change"—the potato, corn, the horse, sugar, and disease. "Each of these change agents has had a dramatic impact on world history, U.S. history, and North Dakota history," says Nordby, "and each has ties to North Dakota agriculture."

One of the most important historical concepts that teachers will learn in the workshop is a new way of looking at the real riches that came from the Americas after Columbus' arrival. "If you look at the history, you see that the most valuable things brought back to Europe were not gold and silver, but rather food crops like corn and potatoes.

As a result of these new foods—as well as the advances in agriculture that settlers learned from the Native Americans—people began living healthier and longer lives," Nordby says.

The advanced workshops will be offered at three locations throughout the state. Because of their continued popularity, the original teacher workshops will also help North Dakota educators learn more about incorporating agriculture into their lessons.



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From the Director:

Many of you have expressed your appreciation for the timely and pertinent content in recent issues of "Notes." It is our hope to continue developing future editions along this vein. Your comments support our doing so. We will continue to include a mixture of articles about instructional materials, programs, events, and people to provide an overview of the varied program which is Ag in the Classroom.

Our 1995 National Conference will have been completed by the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox. Judging from the conference schedule and registrations, I know it will have been another great success!

I hope you'll plan to join us on May 14-18 in Monterey, California for the 1996 National Conference.

Please hold those dates on your calendar for the best Ag in the Classroom conference yet!

Elizabeth A. Wolanyk

Elizabeth A. Wolanyk
Director

Plan Now to Celebrate National Farm-City Week

National Farm-City Week provides a means for rural/urban interaction creating public awareness education about the food and fiber system. Each year since 1955, this event has helped city residents and rural citizens recognize that together, they are "Partners in Progress."

Farm-City Week is always held in the week that includes Thanksgiving. In 1995, the week will be celebrated November 19 - 25.

Farm-City Committees in more than 15,000 communities have developed special activities for the week. In the past, these have included:

- In Colorado, urban students from Lakewood and Bear Creek High Schools spent ten days on Colorado farms and ranches. The exchange, part of the Senior Field Studies program, gave these city teens hands-on experience learning what rural life is about. Students found themselves doing everything from rounding up cattle to repairing fences.
- In New Jersey, students in grades three through five created posters that depicted the theme "Farming Makes Cents for New Jersey." Winners and honorable mentions were displayed at the State House Rotunda.

- In Russell County, Alabama, forty foster children took part in a farm tour. Other Farm-City Week activities included a week-long show of farm exhibits displayed throughout the county.

These community celebrations are part of an information packet developed by the National Farm-City Council. It includes facts about agriculture and the partnership between rural and urban areas, information on starting a Farm-City program, and tips on working with local media. The kit also includes information on celebrating Farm-City Week in schools, with a listing of resources and an annotated bibliography of children's literature with an agricultural message.

Single copies of the Farm-City kit are available free to teachers while supplies last. Contact the National Farm-City Council, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068 or call (708) 399-5764.

*1995 marks the fortieth anniversary of
Farm-City Week.*



FARM - CITY

Park Makes Agriculture Come to Life for Thousands of School-Age Children

Children learn best, research confirms, when activities are both hands-on and concrete. An agricultural demonstration farm outside Cleveland, Ohio, puts those principles into practice and makes agriculture come alive each year for tens of thousands of Ohio students.

Lake Farm Park, a 235-acre demonstration farm, is located in Kirtland, Ohio—about 20 minutes east of Cleveland. "Our mission," says Interpretation and Education Specialist Ray Pataka, "is to show the urban population where their food and fiber comes from."

The park, which is a cross between a working farm and an open-air science and cultural museum, offers a wide variety of hands-on activities for students and teachers—milking cows by hand, making cheese, making ice cream. In the springtime, visitors can also plant corn, pumpkins, and potatoes.

Exhibits combine both a scientific and an historical approach to learning about agriculture. "Since we are a farm park and not a period farm," Pataka explains, "we can show how technological changes have affected agriculture. For example, we can compare human power vs. oxen power vs. horsepower vs. tractor power all in the same demonstration."

For students and teachers, the park has developed programs for preschoolers through high school. The workshops include "Farm Animals Up Close," "Seeds and Seasons," "How Animals Grow," "Pizza Farm," "Plants Inside and Out," and "From Hay to Whey." The last exhibit, Pataka says, is typical of the offerings available at the park. Students milk a cow, analyze milk in a laboratory, and then make their own cheese.

Continued on page 4





A staff dietitian enables the park to incorporate information about nutrition into all programs. Last year, the park served about 44,000 school children, including every fifth grader from a two-county area.

This summer, a new exhibit—The Great Tomato Works—will open at the park. As visitors walk through a larger-than-life tomato plant (24 times actual size), they will learn more about how sunlight is transformed into food first for plants and later for people. The tomato plant was chosen, according to Pataka, because “it is a greenhouse plant, because nearly everyone knows a little something—but not a lot—about it, and because it illustrates how all vascular plants work.”

For more information on Lake Farm Park, contact Ray Pataka, Interpretation and Education Specialist, at 216-256-2122.

Please note: While this photo depicts this child's enthusiasm, it is not a safe way to pet the sheep.

*At Lake Farm Park,
students learn
firsthand about the
food and fiber system.*



New Materials for Middle/High School Emphasize Critical Thinking, Research

Today's high school curricula expect students to think and reason, to do independent research, and to present their ideas clearly. Two new sets of curriculum materials are especially designed to use agricultural topics as a vehicle for teaching these higher-level thinking skills.

People, Animals and the Environment

Whether today's students are seeing a celebrity urging them to Save the Whales or reading about a new medical breakthrough achieved in part by testing on animals, they are often challenged to think about the complex relationship between animals and humans.

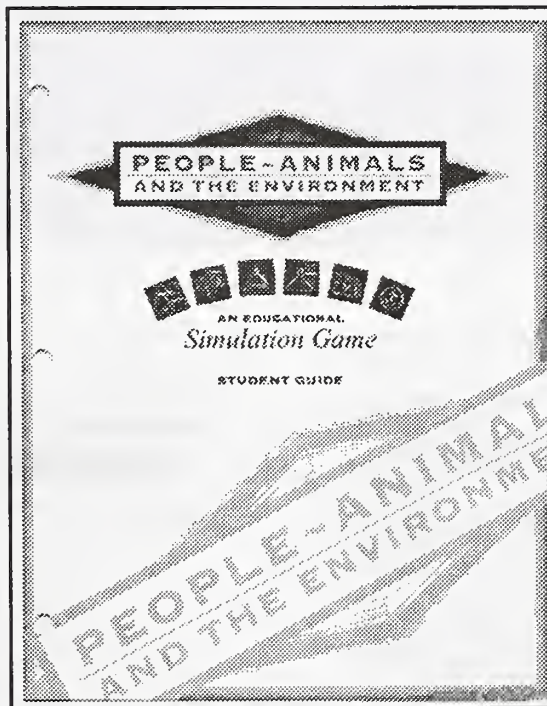
A simulation game developed by the American Animal Welfare Foundation helps students explore their own feelings on these issues. It also helps them understand how public policy on complex and perhaps controversial issues is developed in a democratic society.

"People, Animals and the Environment" takes the form of a Congressional hearing on the topic of animal use in the United States. In this simulation, a Congressional Committee has been formed to examine the use of animals for food, clothing, biomedical research, entertainment, and companionship. The Committee will explore economic, environmental, and ethical issues associated with animal use and advise Congress about specific actions to promote, regulate, or restrict animal use.

Students enact a Congressional hearing as they research the issues related to "People, Animals and the Environment"

Working cooperatively in small groups, students conduct independent research and improve their oral and written communication skills. As they carry out the simulated Congressional hearing, they learn to listen critically to diverse views in an effort to promote open-minded tolerance for the opinions of others.

The simulation could be integrated into environmental science, biology, social studies, history, or language arts classes at the middle or high school level. Single copies, \$35, are available from P.O. Box 1908, St. Paul, MN 55101-1636, or by calling 612-293-1049.



Focusing on Agricultural Issues

Now, more than ever, technological and economic factors are changing the way Americans and people around the world view the importance of agriculture. Scientific progress is continuing to generate new techniques to increase crop yields; improve animal health, reproduction, and growth; and develop new strategies to reduce production costs. Increasing international competition in food and fiber markets, including the U.S. food market, will force American agriculture and related industries to adapt and keep pace with technological advances and market opportunities.

Given the universal importance of food, it is no exaggeration to assume that agriculture is the foundation of what is becoming an increasingly global community. Today's most pressing issues, including the environment, the national debt, international trade, and world health, are all closely related to agriculture.

"Focusing on Agriculture" is an eight-unit teaching package that was developed by the National FFA Foundation to increase awareness of agricultural issues among both agriculture students and the "non-agriculture" public. The materials focus on the following issues: environment, agricultural technology, animals, agricultural careers, economy and trade, agricultural policy, and food safety.

Focusing on Agricultural Issues



Sponsored by
Elanco Animal Health, A Division of Eli Lilly

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as a Special Project of the National FFA Foundation

Additional funding provided by Ciba:
Monsanto Agricultural Company; I&L Biotech Corporation;
Kuhar Agricultural Chemicals/Label (Division of Vigoro Industries);
Ha-Chen Plant Food Company; and Terra International, Inc.

As students work through the curriculum, they learn how to analyze agricultural issues and to formulate propositions on those issues. They learn how to construct arguments from evidence and to conduct research. They also learn how to present their findings to others in their community.

"Focusing on Agricultural Issues" is especially appropriate for high school agriculture courses. The lessons can be adapted, however, for use at the junior high level or even in adult education programs. Single copies are available by contacting the National FFA Foundation, P.O. Box 45205, Madison, WI 53744, (608) 829-3105.

*Students learn to
analyze and discuss
a number of critical
issues in teaching
materials developed
by the national FFA
Foundation.*

Teachers who enroll in an AITC workshop often feel that they are learning a new language. Last summer, two Nebraska teachers, Buck Egenberger and Verna Grabowski, used the new words they were learning to create a poem. Teachers might challenge students to arrange ag-related words to create their own poem.

A cres, America, agronomy, aquifer
G rain, gluten, germination, grow
R ain, residue, ripe, region, routine, river
I rrigation, industry, inspect
C orn, cattle, calf, cropland, checkoff
U nited States, utility, urban
L egumes, land, lysimeter, leaching
T rees, tassel, tons, tillage, techniques
U ser, undeveloped, undisturbed, utilize
R eusable, recycle, research, root
E ggs, ecology, ethanol, extruder, energy

I ndustry, Indians, insects, issues
N o-till, nutrition, nutrients, Nebraska

T rade, tractor, tanning, transportation
H ogs, hybrid, harvest, herbicides
E dible, economics, exports, elevation

C hickens, chiseling, crop, cycle, combine
L ivestock, loess, lakes, lagoons
A ccounts, activities, alternative, adapt
S heep, sorghum, sow, soybean, sprout, silt
S hear, seed, survival, starch, seasons, spuds
R otate, refine, rows, ridge till
O rder, oil, Ogallala Aquifer, open
O ctober, onion, other, overlie, oxygen
M aize, milk, marketing, merchandising, mulch

Books Help Children Learn About Apples

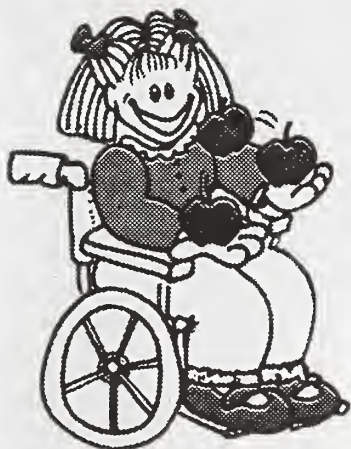
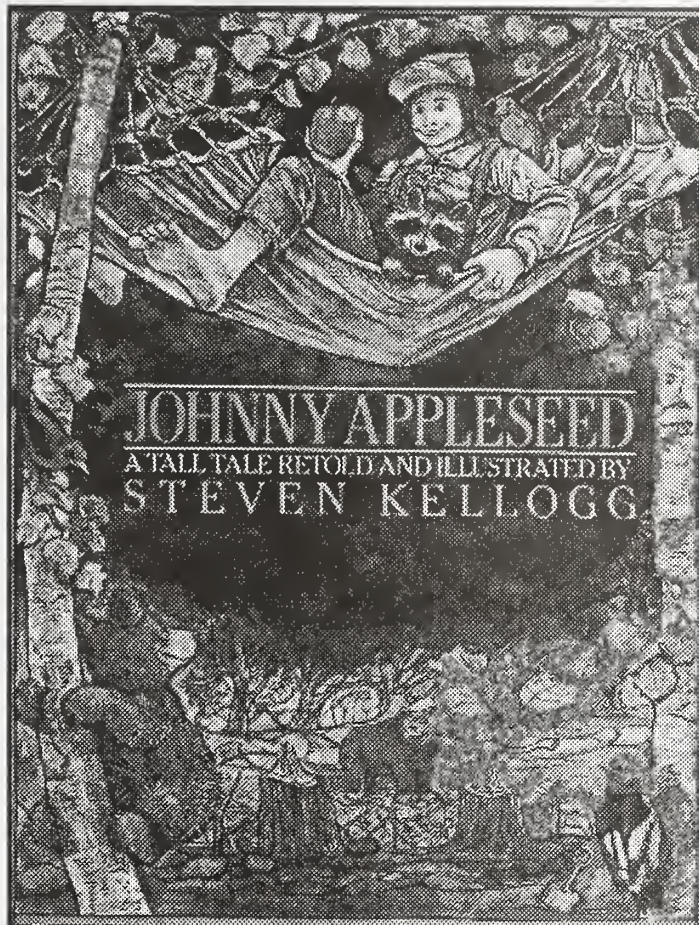
Johnny Appleseed

Johnny Appleseed, written and illustrated by Steven Kellogg, tells the story of John Chapman, a historical figure whose wilderness adventures became larger-than-life legends. Born in Massachusetts during the Revolutionary War, Chapman learned to love apples on his family's farm. "Like most early American families," Kellogg writes, "the Chapmans picked their apples in the fall, stored them in the cellar for winter eating, and used them to make sauces, cider, vinegar, and apple butter."

John headed west as soon as he was able. Along the way, he cleared land and planted orchards so he could supply apples to the settlers he knew would follow. When the settlers did arrive, John befriended them, often giving away his trees. Soon he became known as Johnny Appleseed.

Stories about Chapman were passed from settler to settler. "Sometimes they even exaggerated them a bit," Kellogg says. Some people remembered Johnny sleeping in a treetop hammock and chatting with the birds. Others remembered "that a rattlesnake had attacked his foot. Fortunately, Johnny's feet were as tough as elephant's hide, so the fangs didn't penetrate."

Kellogg says he has tried to interweave incidents from frontier life with the stories that were inspired by Johnny Appleseed—"the most gentle, generous, and beloved of America's mythic figures." The 36-page book was published in 1988 by Morrow Junior Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.



An Apple A Day

"There's more to an apple," writes Jennifer Storey Gillis in *An Apple a Day*, "than meets the eye!" This 60-page activity book includes apple facts, apple games, apple crafts, and apple recipes. Many are appropriate for classroom use.

While not every classroom teacher might encourage students to try the instructions for juggling with apples, teachers will appreciate the wealth of apple-related activities that make learning fun.

An Apple A Day! is available for \$8.95 from Storey Communications, Schoolhouse Road, Pownal, Vermont 05261.

From juggling with apples to making apple pizza, An Apple A Day! includes a wealth of apple-related activities.

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

Alabama

Ms. Jane Alice Lee
2101 Bell Road
Montgomery, AL 36117
334-272-2611

Ms. Brenda Summerlin
Dept of Ag & Industries
PO Box 3336
Montgomery, AL 36193
334-242-5872

Alaska

Mr. Ted Berry
Alaska AITC
P.O. Box 62
Willow, AK 99688-0062
907-495-1018

Arizona

Ms. Deborah Flowers
1741 Gibson Way
Phoenix, AZ 85040-1625
(602) 470-0088

Arkansas

Dr. Larry R. Dale
ASU Center for Economic
Education
P.O. Box 2890
State Univ., AR 72487-2890
501-972-3810

California

Mr. Mark Linder
CA Foundation for AITC
1601 Exposition Blvd FB 18
Sacramento, CA 95815
916-924-4380

Colorado

Ms. Helen Davis
Colorado Dept of Agriculture
700 Kipling St. #4000
Lakewood, CO 80215-5894
303-239-4114

Ms. Bette Binde
Colorado Foundation for
Agriculture
25278 WCR 15
Windsor, CO 80550
303-686-7806

Connecticut

Mr. John R. H. Blum
CT Dept of Agriculture
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 273
Hartford, CT 06106
203-566-4667

Dr. Alfred Mannebach
University of Connecticut
249 Glenbrook Rd
Storrs, CT 06269-2093
203-486-0248

Delaware

Ms. Anne T. Fitzgerald
Delaware AITC
Delaware Dept. of Ag.
2320 S. DuPont Highway
Dover, DE 19901
302-739-4811 Ext. 279

Florida

Ms. Doty Wenzel
545 E. Tennessee
Room 206 Black Building
Tallahassee, FL 32308
904-487-4973

Georgia

Ms. Donna Reynolds
Georgia Farm Bureau
PO Box 7068
Macon, GA 31298
112-474-8411

Hawaii

Mr. Michael Barros
2530 10th Avenue
Bldg. A, Room 23
Honolulu, HI 96816
808-733-9125

Idaho

Mr. Rick Wettley, Director
Wettley Associates
1741 Gibson Way
Meridian, ID 83642
208-888-0988

Illinois

Ms. Stacy Shane
Illinois Farm Bureau
Field Services Division
1701 Towanda Ave
Bloomington, IL 61702-2901
309-557-3334

Indiana

Ms. Pam Bright
Office of Commission
150 West Market, Suite 414
Indianapolis, IN 46024
317-232-8769

Mr. Harry L. Pearson
Indiana Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 1290
Indianapolis, IN 46206
317-692-7851

Iowa

Ms. Barbara Lykins
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
5400 University Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50266-5997
515-225-5425

Kansas

Ms. Sharon Telly
124 Blumont Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
913-532-7948

Jamie Clover Adams
Kansas Fertilizer & Chemical
Assoc.
P.O. Box 1517
Topeka, KS 66601-1517
913-234-0463
913-234-2930 FAX

Kentucky

Ms. Faye Lowe
Kentucky Farm Bureau
9201 Bursen Pkwy
Louisville, KY 40250-0700
502-495-5000

Ms. Royetta Boone
Department of Agriculture
500 Mero St., 7th Floor
Frankfort, KY 40602
502-564-4696

Louisiana

Ms. Barbara Langley
LA Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 95004
Baton Rouge, LA 70895-9004
504-922-6200

Mrs. Lynde Danos
2144 Highway 1
Raceland, LA 70394
504-488-2395

Maine

Mr. Buzz Gamble
Department of Educ.
Sta. #23
Augusta, ME 04222-0433
207-287-5899

Maryland

Steven A. Connelly
Maryland Agricultural Education
Foundation, Inc.
2101 East Fort Avenue - Suite 124
Baltimore, MD 21230
410-752-0671
410-783-0857 FAX

Massachusetts

Ag in the Classroom
c/o Pam Comstock
PO Box 651
Bedford, MA 01730

Michigan

Dr. Eddie Moore
410 Agriculture Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-355-6580

Ms. Julie Chamberlain
Michigan Farm Bureau
7373 W Saginaw Hwy
Lansing, MI 48909
517-323-7000

Minnesota

Mr. Alan Withers
MN Department of Agriculture
90 W Plato Blvd
St Paul, MN 55107
612-296-6688

Mississippi

Ms. Clara A. Bilbo
MS Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 1972
Jackson, MS 39215-1972
601-977-4245

Missouri

Ms. Diane Olson
Missouri Farm Bureau
PO Box 658
Jefferson City, MO 65102
314-893-1400

Montana

Ms. Marie Hovland
Ag in Montana Schools
389 Alport Bench Road
Great Falls, MT 59404-6337
406-727-5045

Nebraska

Ms. Ellen Hellerich
NE Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 80299
Lincoln, NE 68501
402-421-4400 ext 2002

Nevada

Ben Damonte
1300 Marlette Way
Sparks, NV 89431
702-853-6464

New Hampshire

Ms. Lynne Blye
Dept. of Agriculture
Cedar Box 2042
Concord, NH 03302
603-271-3691

New Jersey

Ms. Joni Elliot
NJ Dept. of Agriculture
CN330
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-8897 or 603-7463

New Mexico

Mr. E.G. Blanton
NM Farm & Livestock Bureau
421 N Weter
Les Cruces, NM 88001
505-526-5521

Carrie Hernandez, co-contact
New Mexico Farm & Livestock
Bureau
AITC State Chairman
421 North Water Street
Las Cruces, NM 88001
505-526-5521

New York

Andrew Fagan
New York AITC
408 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-5901
607-255-8122

North Carolina

Ms. Janice Shepard
NC Farm Bureau
PO Box 27766
Raleigh, NC 27611
919-782-1705

North Dakota

Ms. Sarah Nordby
ND Dept. of Agriculture
600 E. Boulevard Ave
6th Floor
Bismarck, ND 58501-0020
701-224-4757

Ohio

Ms. Judy Roush
Ohio Ag Awareness Council
PO Box 479
Columbus, OH 43216-0479
614-249-2429

Oklahoma

Dr. Charles Cox
205 Poultry Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 58505
405-744-5390
FAX 405-744-6522

Ms. Jo Thelmer
Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture
2800 No. Lincoln Bldg.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4298
405-521-3864
FAX 405-521-4912

Oregon

Ms. Malinda Nevin
Oregon AITC
17017 Hwy. 140 E.
Dairy, OR 97625
503-882-3731

Pennsylvania

Ms. Pat Sueck
534 Kennedy Road
Arnville, PA 17302
717-882-3486

Rhode Island

Ms. Carol Stamp
1 Stamp Place
South County Trail
Exeter, RI 02822
401-783-7704

South Carolina

Robbie Myers
SC Ag in the Classroom
4913 College Lake Drive
Florence, SC 29506
803-635-1631

South Dakota

Ms. Melanie Schumacher
SD Ag in the Classroom
P.O. Box 577
Pierre, SD 57501
605-945-2306

Tennessee

Mr. Bobby Beets
Tennessee Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 313
Columbia, TN 38402-0313
615-388-7872

Texas

Mr. Tad Duncan
Texas Farm Bureau
PO Box 2689
Waco, TX 76702-2689
817-772-3030

Utah

Ms. Debra Spielmaker
UT State University
UMC 2315
Logan, UT 84322-2315
801-797-1657

Vermont

Ms. Megan Camp
Shelburne Farms
Shelburne, VT 05482
802-985-8686

Susan R. Duerst
Vermont Farm Bureau
RR 2 Box 123
Richmond, VT 05477
802-434-5646

Virginia

Ms. Michele Awed
VA Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 27552
Richmond, VA 23261
804-784-1234

Washington

Ms. Jill Faunce
WA AITC
P.O. Box 3924
Lacey, WA 98503
509-284-4019

Mr. Doug Hesslen

P.O. Box 4256
Olympia, WA 98504-256
206-902-1940

West Virginia

Mr. William Aiken
WV Farm Bureau
1 Red Rock Road
Buckhannon, WV 26201
304-472-2080

Wisconsin

Mr. Bob Legee
Wisconsin Farm Bureau
7010 Mineral Point Rd
Madison, WI 53705
608-833-8070

Wyoming

Ms. Lori Gross
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-322-5727

Ms. Elaine Moore
Wyoming Ag in the Classroom
2407 Highland Court
Douglas, WY 82633
307-358-6232

Guam

Mr. Victor Artero
College of Ag & Life Sciences
University of Guam
Manglo, Guam 96923
617-734-2575

Micronesia

Dr. Ruben Dayrit
CTAS/College of Micronesia
Kolonia, Ponape
FSM 96941
691-320-2738

Puerto Rico

Mr. Dave Heilig
USDA/SCS
Caribbean Area State Office
GPO Box 4868
San Juan, PR 00936
809-498-5206

Virgin Islands

Mr. Eric Bough
Dept. of Economic Development
& Agriculture
St Croix, VI 00850
809-778-0991

Mr. Otis Hicks
PO Box 804
Christianstad
St. Croix, VI 00821-0804
809-773-0758

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Room 4307, South Bldg.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Washington, D.C. 20250-0991

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